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THE GREAT VICTORY

TWO GREAT WARS are raging in the world: one the conflict of physical force with physical force, limited now for the most part to restricted areas within Europe; the other a conflict of one set of ideas with another set of ideas spreading its operations wherever men think and feel. Of these two the war of physical forces is the lesser, for over and above the physical forces, creating, organizing, and directing them, are the vastly superior powers of opinion and ideals. Alongside the battles of the West, the South, the East, stretching infinitely beyond, are the vastly more significant and increasing battles—the battles of brain with brain and soul with soul.

Since the last issue of this paper the world has witnessed the greatest victory of the war, not in the lesser struggle of physical forces, but in the more significant conflict of ideas.

Examining this statement, we must agree at last that the Central European Powers stand for one set of ideas, and that twenty-one nations of the rest of the world stand for another. This division into two camps has been a gradual development and it is not yet complete. We recall that Mr. Asquith, of Great Britain, speaking as Prime Minister, said in the early days of the war that Great Britain was fighting to vindicate the principle that "small nationalities are not to be crushed in defense of international good faith." This was said at a time when the Kaiser and his Chancellor were vainly attempting to defend the rape of Belgium and of Serbia. Since those days the two groups have set their ideas against each other in a continuous and evolving conflict, with the result that the war of ideas has become more and more acute and significant, and with the further result that the superiority of the aims of the Entente Allies has become increasingly clear. Now the Central Powers have been obliged, at last, partially to define in concrete terms the reasons why they are continuing this war. Count Czernin, Austria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, has tried his hand at it, but his terms relating to Belgium reveal no satisfying sense of justice; and his proposal that Poland, Lithuania, Courland, and portions of Esthonia and Livonia determine their future status by plebiscite, under the control of the German army of occupation, is as unthinkable as it is indefensible. While no set of peace proposals out of the Central European Powers, with the possible exception

of the vote in the Reichstag last July, reveals statesmanship thus far worthy of the name, much less a sense of justice and fair dealing, it is encouraging that there are peace terms from that source. The ideas of the side opposed to the Imperial German Government, expressed from many platforms, in the press, in many books, reveal a developing international statesmanship hopeful as it is sound, and also show that the war of ideas is on, and that the issues are increasingly clear. The fact is that the two sets of ideas are more clearly defined today than ever.

The ideas arrayed against the Imperial German Government are decidedly superior to any Teuton terms we know. They have been set forth from time to time with increasing distinction by Cardinal Mercier of Belgium, by the Pope at Rome, by the British Labor Party, the American Federation of Labor, the Revolutionists of Russia, by Lloyd-George, and Woodrow Wilson. Their superiority has come especially to the fore within the last few weeks. When the President of the United States delivered his address to the Congress, January 8, he began by proposing open covenants of peace without private understandings. That utterance voiced the position held by this Society for many years. It expressed the feelings of the labor parties of the world. It is a belief in the hearts of men everywhere, except around the German Bundesrat. Only a few days before, the Bolsheviki of Russia had adopted a program, the fourteenth section of which urges that the diplomatists at the Peace Congress should "bind themselves to sign no secret treaties." The party in power at Potsdam seems to look upon such a proposal as idealistic and impossible, but the vision of the rest of the world is becoming quite clear upon this matter. This is one illustration of the fact that the strategy of the situation is today politically on the side of the enemies of Kaiserism.

The idealisms, and therefore the hopes, of the world are arrayed against the Imperial German Government. The Bolsheviki program antedated by several days the President's address, but it contains every essential thing set forth in Mr. Wilson's fourteen proposals with the exception of the reference to Austria-Hungary, to the Turkish portion of the Ottoman Empire, to the Polish State, and to an Association of Nations. The President had the Bolsheviki program before him when he phrased his proposals, and he graciously praises it. Besides the views set forth by the President, the Russian democrats

hold that the peace conditions should be settled by a Peace Congress composed of delegates "chosen by national representative bodies." For them freedom of the seas includes the "neutralization of maritime straits, including the canals of Suez and Panama." Their conception of the equality of trade conditions is that all belligerents "should renounce any commercial boycott after the war or the institution of special customs and agreements." In addition to a gradual disarmament on land and sea, they suggest the "re-establishment of militia to replace standing armies." They then apply the principle of the plebiscite to the question of Alsace-Lorraine, to the contested territory in the Balkans, and to Trent and Trieste. They urge that Poland should be autonomous instead of "independent," and that this autonomy should be extended to the Lithuanian and Lettish provinces. They hold that indemnities to Belgium should be provided by an "international financial fund." Any of our readers interested to compare more fully this Russian program with the program of the President will find them both elsewhere in these columns. As one reads the Russian formulas, one readily understands why the President believes that the soul of the Russian people "is not subservient," and why he should say frankly: "Their conception of what is right, of what is human and honorable for them to accept, has been stated with a frankness, a largeness of view, a generosity of spirit, and a universal human sympathy which must challenge the admiration of every friend of mankind." The expression from the Bolsheviks of Russia deserves more credit than it has received from the press of America. It drew from Mr. Wilson his speech of January 8—a speech which crystallizes the aspirations of the foes of Germany and establishes a morale among them more important than guns. The Proletarian is in the saddle and he is galloping rather rapidly, whither we do not know. We do know that Germany has been brought to *pourparlers* at Brest-Litovsk; pan-Germanists are more and more seriously threatened by their most serious of all enemies, namely, the anti-militarists, headed now by Foreign Secretary von Kuehlmann, within the German Empire; Chancellor von Hertling has agreed to the Russian proposal of no annexation, no indemnities, and the right of self-determination by the peoples; and that the arch-Junker, Count Reventlow, admits in his *Tagezeitung* the strength of the peace movement and that it "threatens the inevitable ruin of Germany's future." Austria-Hungary's support of Prussian ambitions has been weakened to the point of collapse. Turkey wishes she had never entered the war. Bulgaria is thoroughly frightened. And all of these things are so because the thinking peoples of central Europe are beginning to see the light before the eyes of their enemies and to behold that it is good.

Recruiting of great ideas has made it possible for the enemies of the Imperial German Government to win a victory in this war, a victory of brains, thus far the greatest victory of the war—a victory so far-reaching that the end of this war and the end of all war is in consequence immeasurably nearer.

THE PRICE OF PEACE

WITH Congressman Joe Cannon, we, too, wish that the President's address before the Congress, January 8, might be thoroughly distributed and taught to the people of Germany and Russia, for in that address was set forth, more definitely than heretofore, the price which the peoples must pay if this war is not to be fought in vain. Especially does it set forth the principles to which the people of the Central Powers must subscribe before we can enter into any hopeful negotiations looking toward peace. And some of the principles set forth by the President contain no little food for the consumption of statesmen at home as well as for the responsible leaders among our allies—Italy, France, England, Japan—who have brought upon themselves what under different circumstances might be called something of a rebuke, indeed something of a warning.

Undismayed by the technical difficulties involved, without reference to the unhappy fate of the Declaration of London, in the face of an English opposition of long standing, in the face of some recent unhappy secret treaties and agreements between some of our most intimate Allies and the Romanoff régime, Mr. Wilson places at the forefront of his program two principles which must cause no little consternation among the conservatives everywhere, especially among the older statesmen of the school of Tallyrand and Metternich. The principles are that we shall do away with secret diplomacy, and that there must be absolute freedom of the seas in peace or war. It must be an infinite consolation to the spirit of Richard Cobden that such an international voice is heard at last, insisting that there must be a removal of all international economic barriers and an establishment of commercial equality among nations, even though certain of our republicans at home and the favored special interests everywhere must at least raise their eyebrows.

The proposal for the reduction of national armaments will lend new hope to those who strove for the realization of this purpose when it was set forth by the Czar of Russia in 1898, and to those of us who still insist that the abolition of international threats is a without-which-not in the campaign for the peace of international justice.

Proposals five to thirteen, inclusive, are concrete applications of the fundamental principles upon which